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THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON METROPOLITAN TORONTO
BY
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF NORTH YORK

SUBMISSION

to

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON METROPOLITAN TORONTO

by

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January, 1964

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The Board of Education for the Township of North York appreciates the opportunity to present a brief to the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto.

In the preparation of this submission, the Board has restricted itself to a discussion of its designated responsibility, the general jurisdiction of public education within North York, and of the essential inter-relationships in educational administration within Metropolitan Toronto.

All public services have emerged to fulfil a need. They have evolved because interested citizens recognized a problem in their own community which had to be met.

In Ontario in the latter part of the 18th Century parents banded together to provide a common school and to engage a teacher. This practice became so characteristic of the communities that the Common School Act of 1816 was passed to give sanction, encouragement, and colonial or provincial revenue to local education efforts. The implementation of this act could apply only after the people of a community had built a school and were in a position to supply a teacher. This being established, three trustees could be elected to examine and appoint a teacher. Therefore, the origin of the public school system in Ontario pre-dates education by government; the common schools were indigenous to the communities; and the people of the communities exercised and accepted responsibility for education before there was either the force or sanction of legislation.

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This active interest of the community in the schools has been characteristic of the people of Ontario for almost one hundred and seventy-five years. Although the scope of education has been broadened, the form of administration modified, and provincial support increased, the success of the educational system throughout Ontario is based upon the interest and willingness of the citizens to support local education through payment of local taxes and through personal service on the boards of local schools.

The increased requirements of public education in our present complex society demand that a comprehensive administration be established which will ensure at once a financial base broad enough and a population large enough to ensure the funds and the number of students required to provide educational opportunities related to the varying needs of the individual and to the needs of the society. Although no specific research has established the optimum size for the modern educational system, it is our considered judgement that a school system does not require an enrollment greater than, say, 75,000 students to be able to organize its own essential educational services. Such would include psychological and research services, special education, in-service training programmes, adult education courses, technical and commercial programmes, supervision and co-ordination of instruction, guidance services, etc. etc.

Early in 1953, the Ontario Municipal Board published the results of its deliberations respecting the applications of the City of Toronto and of the Town of Mimico to annex certain lands adjoining their boundaries. These recommendations formed the essential foundation for The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act.

In dealing with education, the Ontario Municipal Board stressed the importance of local boards of education in these terms:

Local boards of education would be continued and would retain all their present powers, duties and responsibilities, but a major source of revenue would be provided by the Metropolitan Council with a corresponding reduction in local levies. As in the case of capital expenditures, they would be at liberty to provide additional maintenance expenditures for their own pupils without limitation, but these additional expenditures would be financed as at present by local taxation only.

The importance of a continuing local responsibility for, and interest in, local schools, which has been a distinctive and valuable feature of the Ontario school system since its inception, has been fully recognized, and centralization of control has been limited to matters which are considered essential to the success of the basic scheme. The evidence presented at the hearing has convinced the board that the best interests of education in the metropolitan area will be served if the close and intimate relationship between the homes of the residents and the schools attended by their children is maintained. A number of the local communities through their democratically elected local boards have demonstrated a willingness and ability to experiment and to provide an educational programme well above the ordinarily accepted standards. If the local taxpayers are able and willing to devote a large proportion of their taxation to support such a programme, the board sees no reason why they should not be permitted to do so, subject to the paramount right of ratepayers in less favoured sections of the area to secure for their children a reasonable education without excessive taxation.

This philosophy of educational administration was incorporated in "Part VII - Education" in The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act, passed by the Ontario legislature in 1953. Under the terms of this Act, the Metropolitan School Board was formed, the various school boards in North York were abolished and The Board of Education for the Township of North York established.

¹ Ontario Municipal Board, Decisions and Recommendations of the Board, January 20, 1953. In the matter of the application of Toronto and Mimico, Sections 20, 22, of The Municipal Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1950, C 243 (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1953), pp 57, 58.

At this time, the financial situation in several municipalities, including North York, was extremely grave. The rapid influx of population requiring the immediate construction of hundreds of pupil-spaces and the employment of scores of teachers required capital and current expenditures far in excess of the tax base and resources of the local community.

The Act provided that the Metropolitan School Board would be composed of ten representatives from the City of Toronto, one representative from each of the area boards, plus one city and one suburban representative from the Metropolitan Separate School Board. At the outset, the system of representation was reasonably adequate.

The Metropolitan School Board was empowered to levy a uniform mill rate throughout the Metropolitan area and to receive all legislative grants, with certain minor exceptions. These monies were then distributed to the various boards of education in the form of "maintenance assistance payments" in support of the current operating budgets of the local boards. The Metropolitan School Board also paid to the Metropolitan Council monies in respect to repayment of "approved" debenture costs.

All local school debentures outstanding as of January 1st, 1954, were assumed by the Metropolitan School Board. Subsequent school debentures were also assumed by the Metropolitan School Board up to the "approved cost for grant purposes" established by the Department of Education. It soon became apparent that schools could not be built within the Departmental approval, more particularly following alterations in the bases of this approval. The Metropolitan School Board referred this problem to its Advisory Council which established a "ceiling cost formula" for school construction. In this

procedure, the credit of the Metropolitan Corporation supported the purchase of debenture funds up to the ceiling cost; the amount debentured in excess of the Departmental approval was, however, charged against the local board and, further, no restriction could be placed by the Metropolitan School Board on the amount of current funds which might be used to supplement the amount of the debenture funds provided.

Among other responsibilities given to the Metropolitan School Board was the determination, in consultation with the local boards, of attendance areas of schools serving pupils from more than one municipality. This responsibility has been fulfilled with a minimum of difficulty and, we submit, to the advantage of the students affected. Provision has been made by the Metropolitan School Board that the "sending" board pay to the "receiving" board a fee which equals the cost to the receiving board up to the cost of the sending board. The Metropolitan School Board pays to the receiving board all difference in costs. In this way, such attendance areas can be established in the best interests of education and without added cost to the sending or the receiving board.

The Act also provided that the Metropolitan School Board might assume financial responsibility for special education. Because of the great differences in the provisions for assisting and training deviate children which existed throughout the Metropolitan area in 1954, the Metropolitan School Board did assume the total costs of these programmes. However, at the beginning of 1961, it was considered that special education programmes could be provided by the local boards adequately without delimiting the educational opportunities provided deviate children, and the costs of these programmes were assumed by the local boards. The Metropolitan School Board has, however, continued to support the Sunny View School for crippled children and the School for the Deaf which are

operated by the Toronto Board of Education to provide specialized educational facilities for all children within the Metropolitan community. The financing of junior vocational schools, recently constructed under the provisions of the Federal-Provincial Technical and Vocational Training Agreement, to provide educational opportunity for particular classes of children has been assumed by the Metropolitan School Board.

The accomplishments of the Metropolitan form of government² and of the Metropolitan School Board have been exceptional. Certainly we in North York realize that by ourselves we could not have carried out our responsibilities in the development of our educational system. Despite this, we believe the time has come for realistic appraisal of the purpose and function of the Metropolitan School Board and of the local boards of education. It is our contention that the notable success of the Metropolitan arrangement indicates that our present problems in finance and administration can be solved, not by drastic and revolutionary change but by modification of responsibilities of the Metropolitan School Board and local boards to enable each to function more efficiently and more effectively. It is noted that the Municipality of Metropolitan

² With very few exceptions there is widespread admiration throughout North America and the United Kingdom and in Europe, for the form of government inaugurated in Toronto on January 1, 1954, and for its achievements. There is, as well, a real understanding in these countries of the problems that remain unsolved and the failure to attain perfection in providing services to a large and growing population.

Canada, quite frankly, has made few contributions to the development of governmental organization in a democratic society. It is not an exaggeration, however, to state that Metropolitan Toronto is widely regarded as one of the most significant political innovations developed anywhere in the postwar period. Nor is it extravagant to suggest that total amalgamation in Toronto and the dissolution of Metro will set back seriously the numerous efforts at governmental re-organization in metropolitan areas in the United States. Dr. Albert Rose. "The Case Against Total Amalgamation in Metropolitan Toronto." Public Affairs Report, Bulletin of the Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, April, 1963. pp. 1-2.

Toronto Act has been amended on more than one occasion; and it may be that all that is now required, from the standpoint of the provision of public educational services, is further amendment in respect to present and anticipated problems.

It would be, of course, both stupid and dangerous to ignore the difficulties in the present situation. It is suggested, however, that there are solutions which may be applied to the precise problems of the present arrangement, retaining its best features and, at the same time, laying a firm foundation for further modifications and improvements as these may become necessary.

One essential modification is to provide that the composition of the Metropolitan School Board be more truly representative. There can be no defence of a board on which, for example, the 10,000 people in Swansea have the same representation as the 300,000 in North York, and on which some 100,000 children in Toronto schools are represented by ten members while the 68,000 children in North York schools have only one member.

The major part of all educational budgets is required for the payment of salaries of academic staff. It seems entirely logical that the salary schedules which are the basis of this large part of our financial programme should be established by the Metropolitan School Board. Therefore, this Board has by resolution requested that legislative provision be made for the negotiation of teachers' salary schedules by the Metropolitan School Board or some committee representing all boards in Metropolitan Toronto. Although this has not received unanimous acceptance within the Metropolitan area, it is contended that a central authority which has been able to arrange the financing of the tremendous programme of school construction within the Metropolitan area without infringing on the

autonomy of the local boards, which have retained responsibility for design and construction of schools, can negotiate salary schedules applicable within the Metropolitan area without in any way infringing upon the autonomy of the local boards which would retain responsibility for the selection and assignment of staff.

In the legislation establishing the Metropolitan School Board, it was intended, we understand, that the major costs of school construction should be debentured over the whole Metropolitan area. One of the major difficulties in the present situation arises from the distinction between the approved cost of the Department of Education (a Metropolitan debenture) and the ceiling cost formula of the Metropolitan School Board (which may be, in part, a local debenture) -- a problem which is aggravated by the large sums available out of current funds to some boards but not to others. This condition could, it is suggested, be rectified by amendment to present legislation, to provide that construction costs to the limit of the ceiling cost formula be debentured over the entire Metropolitan area.

During the past ten years, the educational system in North York has exhibited unprecedented development, and is now the third largest local education authority in Canada; this could not have been accomplished without the support of the Metropolitan Government. During the same period the North York Board has developed certain unique and valuable educational programmes, including the institution of the tri-level system; this could not have been accomplished without local autonomy.

Shortly after the formation of The Board of Education for the Township of North

York on January 1st, 1954, it became apparent that the trustees faced an unparalleled expansion of school buildings and facilities to meet the needs of Canada's fastest growing community. The Board realized that it had the opportunity and the challenge to plan with common sense, vision, and courage. After several months of serious consideration, the Board on June 28th, 1956, formally adopted the tri-level system of education, comprising public schools, junior high schools, and secondary schools, which has become an outstanding feature of the North York educational system. This demonstrates the value of educational planning at the time when the pressures of phenomenal growth and need for stringent economy are greatest. It is obvious, of course, that the best time to design a total educational system is in this early stage of development; it is equally obvious that even the most judicious planning on such a wide basis cannot succeed without complete understanding and active support of the community -- and without local autonomy in educational administration.

In North York, Junior High Schools comprising Grades 7, 8, and 9 provide the most appropriate educational environment for the early adolescent and, at the same time, permit the elementary school and the secondary school to perform their functions more precisely in terms of the needs of their students. In addition, the Junior High School is so constituted that it provides the ideal transition from the elementary school to the senior school, and has permitted the development of a philosophy of education expressed in terms of the needs of the individual, and one in which education is viewed as a continuum from Kindergarten to University entrance. It is most probable that without the local autonomy presently assured our Board, the further development of the tri-level system, as we know it, would be in jeopardy or so

drastically modified that its present purposes would be unattainable.

It is the considered judgement of this Board that the Metropolitan system of government, in so far as it affects education, has been most successful; and that it can be modified to meet effectively the changing complexities of the present situation and to provide adequately for the future development of education within Metropolitan Toronto.

In this presentation the Board does not intend to review various reports and statistical analyses which have been prepared on various aspects of educational administration in the Metropolitan area. The Board wishes, however, to express briefly certain judgements concerning two recurring factors in certain of these studies: the proposal that all school boards in Metropolitan Toronto be amalgamated into one single educational authority and the implication in some of the arguments that uniformity in taxation and equality of educational opportunity are synonymous.

After serious consideration, the Board contends that the complete amalgamation of all educational services within the Metropolitan community under one educational authority would be a grievous error. We do, however, suggest the necessity of establishing local education authorities in boroughs large enough to provide the financial and population bases essential to the development of the modern urban educational system.

It is suggested, further, that any proposal that all educational services should be provided by one school board should be examined in the light of experience in other large centres. In this connection, Dr. Albert Rose³ has written:

Today, New York City is trying to break down its huge

³ Ibid., p.2

governmental area into local community planning units and local school boards in a desperate effort to stimulate local interest and initiative.

. . . .

The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-60 have essentially the same basic meaning. The Commissioners wrote that "The Boroughs should be the primary units of local government and should perform all functions except those which can only be effectively performed over the wider area of Greater London." Legislation recently introduced into Parliament to implement the Report of the Royal Commission will strengthen the attempt to create meaningful and viable boroughs for the most part with a population of 200,000-300,000.

There can be no argument that a relationship exists between the amount of money available to education and the extent and variety of educational services provided. It is not acceptable to us, however, that this is an exact correlation; indeed we find it extremely difficult to evaluate educational opportunity according to any mathematical formula. It is our contention, further, that serious inequalities in the financial support for education in local areas within Metropolitan Toronto can be overcome by the institution of a foundation tax programme. It is, indeed, the foundation programme which is the basis of equalization of costs in all areas where there are rich and poor within the same wide organization. This is the general principle on which the legislative grants of the Department of Education are based.

The borough system provides economic and orderly government for a Metropolitan area without submerging local identity and character. It permits innovation in procedures and programmes and this is of particular importance to an educational system. In this organization, citizen interest and participation, which are social values directly related to the ability of the individual citizen to identify himself with that part of Government which is closest to him and to his family, are not sacrificed. The borough

system provides flexibility for future development; new areas could be added without reference to the extent of urbanization of the new borough and with little disturbance to the established Metropolitan organization.

On the other hand, amalgamation is a drastic measure. It is final, inflexible, and irrevocable. The pride and stimulation of local initiative would be stifled. Policy-making would become more a factor of administration than an expression of community needs. A single Board of Education for the entire Metropolitan area is not politically practical -- either the Board would itself be so large as to become cumbersome and unwieldy or each trustee would be required to represent a constituency so large that an election campaign could be financed only with the support of a political party. In our considered judgement, therefore, total amalgamation of educational services in this area is a danger of such magnitude that it should not be entertained.

The Board of Education for the Township of North York respectfully recommends that modification of the Metropolitan form of educational administration include the establishment of a borough system with a Foundation Tax Plan, and the strengthening and extension of the responsibilities and powers of the Metropolitan School Board.

The basic principles on which these modifications and changes should be effected are, we suggest:

1. The local education authority should be designed, wherever feasible, in terms of the financial and population bases required by the modern urban educational system. It is recognized that, in certain instances, financial assistance may be necessary to a local board which can be provided through the Foundation Tax Plan

or that special educational arrangements may be necessary to a local board which can be provided by co-operation with other boards through the Metropolitan School Board.

2. The principle of representation by population should apply, in broad terms, to the composition of the Metropolitan School Board. This can be effected by establishing a factor relating to population which would determine the number of trustees to serve on the Metropolitan School Board and the number to be elected to this Board by each local education authority.

3. We recognize that the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto may recommend changes in municipal organization or in municipal boundaries, even division of existing municipalities, and in certain areas this may well work to the advantage of the local education authorities. In any event, however, we state it, as a general principle, that the jurisdiction of the local education authority and the municipal organization should coincide. It is noted that this does not preclude the establishment of one local education authority for more than one municipal organization, as in the case of the Lakeshore Board of Education now serving the municipalities of Mimico, New Toronto, and Long Branch.

We believe, however, that reformation in educational administration in the Metropolitan area is an urgent and present necessity and should not be delayed pending a final solution, which may perhaps involve drastic changes in political units and which will undoubtedly require long study.

Accordingly, based on existing municipal organizations, the following arrangement of boroughs for the establishment of local education authorities is submitted as an example of the implementation of these principles:

<u>Borough</u>	<u>*Population</u>	<u>Metro School Board Representation (nearest 100,000)</u>	<u>Taxable Assessment \$</u>
Toronto and Swansea	652,288	7	1,909,171,911
Etobicoke and the Lakeshore	218,386	2	635,353,380
Forest Hill Village, York Township & Weston	158,451	2	326,036,755
East York and Leaside	89,562	1	210,466,221
Scarborough	226,076	2	467,170,635
North York	303,577	3	777,598,457
Representatives of the Metropolitan Separate School Board		2	
Metropolitan School Board		<u>19</u>	

*Statistics as of October 1963

This organization of boroughs would provide even the smallest local education authorities with financial resources and school population equal to or greater than many cities in Ontario. At the same time, the larger boroughs would not become so vast and impersonal that the machinery of professional administration would overshadow the essential interest and active participation of citizens as expressed in the activities of trustees elected to represent a relatively cohesive and comprehensible area.

In making these recommendations, we are not suggesting that the borough system will effect complete equalization of educational costs, but it is our considered judgement that the formation of boroughs, coupled with the foundation programme, can lessen significantly inequalities in the ability of local education authorities to meet the rapidly increasing costs of public education. At the same time we are convinced that the local educational systems will be strengthened and that the educational opportunities of the individual student at his local school will be greatly enhanced.

The reorganization of the local education authorities would, of course, permit a re-definition of the constitution and responsibilities of the Metropolitan Board.

We recommend, therefore, that each of the local education authorities (boroughs) would appoint one of its members for each 100,000 population or major fraction thereof to serve on the Metropolitan School Board. We believe it is logical to provide, further, that as boroughs may be added to the Metropolitan area in the future, or as populations change, the composition of the Metropolitan School Board be adjusted according to the suggested formula. (Such modifications should correspond to the terms of office of the elected trustees and might occur only at stated periods of time.)

The re-organized Metropolitan School Board would be so truly representative, now and in the future, that it could and should be empowered to carry out certain responsibilities which can, perhaps, be more efficiently performed by one authority for the whole Metropolitan community.

Accordingly we recommend that

1. Capital financing should continue to be under the control of the Metropolitan School Board. The ceiling cost formula for new school construction should be maintained, subject to annual review to ensure that the formula bears a direct relationship to current building costs and changing educational requirements. Ceiling cost formulae for the rehabilitation or modernization of schools should be established. Debenture funds to the limit of the ceiling cost formula should be made available to the local board and charged to the Metropolitan School Board.

When it is necessary to incur expenditures for school construction beyond the ceiling cost, a local board should be required to secure the approval of

the Metropolitan School Board for the use of current funds, even though these funds are obtained from the local municipality.

2. A foundation plan should be instituted to provide flexibility for adjustments in the maintenance assistance payments of the Metropolitan School Board and so compensate for inequalities in the ability of local education authorities to meet educational expenditures.

3. The Metropolitan School Board should be empowered to establish a self-insurance fund for school property.

4. The Metropolitan School Board as a central authority should be empowered to negotiate with the teachers' Federations to establish salary schedules for academic staff within the Metropolitan area, the local board retaining the right of selection and assignment of staff.

5. The responsibilities of the Metropolitan School Board for the determination, in consultation with the local boards, of school attendance areas involving more than one borough should be retained.

6. Facilities for special education should be financed by the Metropolitan School Board -- and, as at present, operated by a local education authority -- only when such services are entirely experimental in nature or when the necessity for such educational provisions can be more efficiently performed by the central board in behalf of the entire community.

In the event that a special school for adult education and re-training in day and evening classes is established in the future, it is our contention that such a school, serving the entire area, should be financed by the Metropolitan School

Board and operated by the local education authority.

7. The Metropolitan School Board should, in our judgement, be charged with a measure of responsibility for research in certain areas of educational administration. We recommend, therefore, that a research department in the Metropolitan School Board should be established to

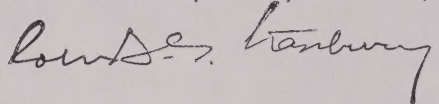
- provide valid data for the negotiation of teachers' salary schedules;
- carry out population studies to ensure a precise basis for new school construction in advance of need;
- assist in studies of new school design and construction;
- develop a building code for schools which would be acceptable throughout the Metropolitan area;
- assist in essential experimentation in the use of data processing in educational administration;
- participate, at request, or where considered necessary, in studies of the financial and business management operations of local boards; and
- provide and maintain a research library available to the Metropolitan area.

In the preparation of this brief the Board kept constantly in mind the conviction that the ultimate purpose of any educational organization or administration is to serve most efficiently and effectively the individual student in his classroom. We believe that implementation of the recommendations in this brief will make possible provision of all necessary educational arrangements according to the unique needs of individual students

and will do this without the necessity of establishing a giant bureaucracy which would inevitably and unavoidably stifle educational progress.

The Board of Education for the Township of North York wishes to express again our appreciation of the successes achieved in educational administration by the Metropolitan system and, at the same time, re-state our understanding of the necessity for modification to meet changed conditions now and in the future. We believe that implementation of the recommendations presented in this brief will foster the further development of education, in the tradition of our province, as a public service closely related to the community, fully understood and actively supported by the people it serves.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert D. G. Stanbury". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Stanbury" being the most legible parts.

Robert D. G. Stanbury
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

January 27, 1964

